

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

No claims are currently being cancelled.

Claim 1 is currently being amended.

Claim 9 is currently being added.

This amendment amends and adds claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-9 are now pending in this application.

As a first initial matter, the Examiner is requested to indicate that he has considered the reference submitted in a proprietary Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 8, 2000 as required by M.P.E.P. 724.04.

As a second initial matter, it is noted that the Office Action mailed October 3, 2003 lists claims 1-7 as presently pending, when in fact claims 1-8 were pending at that time. Claim 8 was added by way of an Amendment Accompanying RCE, filed on August 25, 2003, whereby claim 8 should have been considered in the Office Action.

As a third initial matter, it is noted that the Office Action refers to claim language of the original claims, which has been amended and no longer is recited in those claims (or is recited in a different manner in those claims). For example, page 2 of the Office Action refers to "said image reading device is set to have a correspondence relation with respect to the directory . . ." While such language was in originally-filed claim 1, that language was removed in the Reply filed on February 3, 2003. Accordingly, Applicants seek clarification with regard to the application of the prior art to the proper set of claims pending in

this application, and request that any further rejection to the correctly pending claims be deemed non-final.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art (specification, pages 2-3) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,880,727 to Barrett et al.; claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art (specification, pages 2-3) in view of Barrett et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,115,040 to Bladow et al. These rejections are traversed with respect to the presently pending claims, for at least the reasons given below.

Barrett et al. and Bladow et al. disclose an MFP (Multi-function Peripherals) technology, in which the functions of a copy machine, a facsimile, a printer, etc. are integrated in one equipment, and which is different from the field of the present invention that is directed to the combination of an MFP and a server. Accordingly, Barrett et al. and Bladow et al. are not appropriate for being cited against the presently claimed invention, since they are stand-alone devices that do not interact with a server.

Also, the Office Action incorrect asserts that the presently pending claims are obvious over the applicant's admitted prior art in view of Barrett et al. and Bladow et al. Although the Applicant's admitted prior art describes the transmission and reception of data between an MFP and a server, it does not disclose that the correspondence of the hierarchical structure of the MFP to that of the server is 1:1. Moreover, none of the references refers to a server, and thus there is no teaching or suggestion in any of the cited art of record of having a 1: 1 correspondence between the hierarchical structure of the MFP to that of the server to be 1:1.

Accordingly, presently pending independent claims 1 and 7 are patentable over the cited art of record.

Dependent claims 2-6 and 8 are patentable due to their respective dependencies on their base claims, as well as for the specific features recited in

those claims. For example, the features of claim 3, which relate to a two-way-changing of information stored in the image reading device and the file server (that is, a change in "a" results in a change to "b", and a change to "b" results in a change to "a"), is not taught or suggested by any of the cited art of record. Also, the features of claim 8, which is a claim that is not discussed at all in the Office Action, are believed to provide a separate basis for patentability beyond those provided above with respect to its base claim.

Also, new claim 9 has been added, whereby the features of new claim 9 are believed to provide a separate basis for patentability of that claim, beyond the ones discussed above with respect to its base claim.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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